AHMAD): (a) and (b) As per the performance monitoring report of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for the quarter ended December 2004, MTNL (Delhi and Mumbai) mobile service is meeting all the Quality of Service (QoS) benchmarks prescribed by TRAI. In case of some telecom circles of BSNL however, certain parameters such as 'Call Success Rate' and percentage of connection with good voice quality are not being met. Congestion in BSNL's mobile network is being observed in some areas due to limitation in network capacity.

(c) Both BSNL and MTNL are continuously striving to improve Quality of Service (QoS). The mobile network is being optimized for its performance continuously and its monitoring has been strengthened.

BSNL

BSNL has been augmenting its GSM network continuously and action has been taken to augment the network capacity by 12 million lines progressively in 2005 to ensure good QoS and to meet the overwhelming demand. BSNL has launched GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) and MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) in all service areas except Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The Company is keeping pace with advancement in technology and providing latest service to its subscribers.

MTNL

MTNL is also upgrading its GSM network in phased manner besides expansion of capacity both in Delhi and Mumbai. With the addition of the Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs), GSM network performance is improving. The new network supports all the latest features like GPRS and MMS. Continuous efforts are on to provide more value addition.

Expansion of Communication Sector in Rural Areas

1705. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BALAPTE:

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the demand for telephone and post office facilities is increasing in the rural areas in view of the technological advancement in these fields;

(b) if so, the present situation in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh in the above fields;

(c) whether no improvement has been made in these fields in the rural areas despite the present expansion in the communication sector; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD):

Reply pertaining to Department of Telecom

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The status of Rural Telephone connection provided and waiting list as on 31-12-2004 in the States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh is given in the Statement (See below).

(c) and (d) In the field of telecommunication, the following steps have been taken:

(i) A large scale induction of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) system has been planned for quicker roll out of telecom network and to reduce the waiting list. As on 31-12-2004, 1,748 Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) out of 2,642 SDCAs have been provided with at least one Base Terminal Station (BTS).

(ii) To provide telecom facilities at par with urban areas, 6,290 Single Base Module (SBM) Exchanges have been converted to Remote Subscriber Units (RSUs) 10,552 numbers of 256 Port C-DOT exchanges have been converted into Access Node RuralAutomatic Exchange (AN-RAX).

(iii) 66,822 Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the uncovered villages including 14,183 villages in far-flung areas on satellite media are planned to be provided in a phased manner by November, 2007.

Reply pertaining to Department of Posts

(a) and (b) There is a continuing demand for expanding access to Post Office facilities from different part of the country, including Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. During the first two years of the 10th Plan period 485 Post Offices and 2,367 Panchayat Sanchar Seva Kendras (PSSKs) have been opened in these Circle and 41 Post Offices have been relocated to cater to needy areas.

(c) and (d) Post Offices are opened subject to compliance with distance, population and income norms, and Post Offices are available in 39.54% of the Gram Panchayat villages in these circles. Of the remaining 65,202 Gram Panchayat villages without Post Offices, only 1,776 satisfy the distance and population norms. They are provided Post Offices as and when they satisfy the income norm and subject to availability of resources. The Department has also extended the benefit of advances in technology to Post Offices in rural areas by providing e-post facilities through 650 nodal Post Offices linked through additional means of transmission to every Post Office in the country. Similarly, money order transmission has been expedited through a VSAT network established throughout the country.

Statement

Status of rural telephone connection provided and waiting list as on 31.12.2004 in the States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh

SI. No.	Name of the State	Rural Telephone Connections PROVIDED	Waiting list
1	Maharashtra	14,16,154	1,33,546
2	Madhya Pradesh	3,02,638	9,253
3	Rajasthan	6,58,503	1,18,552
4	Jharkhand	1,04,193	5,196
5	Uttar Pradesh	6,83,946	92,611